

## Troops sent to Caucasus region

MOSCOW (AP) — Soviet troops reinforcements have been deployed in a remote region of the Caucasus mountain where tension is mounting between Abkhazia and Ossetian communities, reports from the area said Sunday. A spokesman for the National Front of South Ossetia, an autonomous region within Soviet Georgia, said Georgians attacking military Outposts of the recent death of a Georgian and claimed by Abkhazia of rebels leading to the conflict which started in October. "We are virtually blockaded," he told Reuters by telephone. "We are victims in a state of siege. There is no chance for us to get out." He said reinforcements of Soviet Army troops had joined forces in the area, where Georgians had been setting up specific blockades since clashes between the two groups erupted in November. Dozens of people were injured in the fighting. It was not immediately known how many troops were involved or when they were sent to the area in the northwest of the Soviet Union.

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# King returns from Baghdad

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein returned to Amman Sunday evening following a two-day visit to Baghdad where he led Jordan's delegation to celebrations of Iraq's Army Day and held talks with President Saddam Hussein on pan-Arab, bilateral and international affairs. Talks between the two leaders also centred on preparations for the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) summit scheduled to be held in Amman in February.

King Hussein, who was accompanied by Prime Minister Minister Badran, Political Advisor Adnan Abu Odeh and Army Chief of

Staff General Fathi Abu Talib, was seen off from Baghdad by President Hussein and other Iraqi leaders.

Upon departure from Iraq, the King sent President Hussein a cable expressing appreciation for the hospitality accorded to the Jordanian delegation and paying tribute to Iraq's endeavours, which, he said, re-established self-confidence in the hearts of the Arab people.

The Army Day parade held in Baghdad presented another proof of the might of the Iraqi people and armed forces which serve as a tool to deter the aggressors, the King said.

Earlier Sunday, Badran and First Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yassin Ramadan visited the royal cemeteries in Baghdad and recited verses of the Holy Koran. They also visited the tomb of

the late Iraqi Defence Minister Adnan Khairallah, the Saddam Arts Centre and the Iraqi National Museum.

## Jordanian conscript missing; Israel says 'infiltrator' killed

AMMAN (J.T.) — A conscript with the Armed Forces has been missing with his personal weapon since Saturday from his post at the Al Einmeen area near the demarcation line with Israel, an army spokesman said Sunday.

"Members of his unit began looking for him but have not yet found him," said the spokesman in a statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The statement followed reports that Israeli soldiers had killed a "Jordanian soldier" in a "gunbat-

de" Sunday in the same area. Israeli Radio said the "infiltrator" opened fire on Israeli troops with his M-16 rifle from a concrete bunker on the bank of the Yarmouk River.

An Israeli army spokesman said the man was killed in a shootout after being found beyond the demarcation line.

"An Israeli army force detected a Jordanian soldier inside 'Israeli territory'. He was shot and killed. There were no injuries to our forces," the statement

said.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Marwan Al Qasem was quoted Sunday as saying Israel opened fire on Jordanian territory last week to try to divert attention from the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories.

"What Israel tried to do in the past few days... opening fire towards Jordanian territory for no reason... was part of its constant efforts to shift attention away from the internal processes it is

facing to other areas," Qasem was quoted as saying by Sawt Al Shaab newspaper.

The Israeli army had claimed that its patrols came under fire on five different occasions in the past week and that the fire came from the Jordanian side of the demarcation line. But Jordan dismissed the claims and said Israeli patrols opened fire from their side of the line with no apparent reason. In one incident, Israeli fire was directed at two unarmed farmers, the Armed Forces said.

The Lower House of Parliament Saturday condemned Israeli acts of provocation.

Fatah Uprising, a Syrian-based Palestinian group, claimed it mounted cross-border attacks Thursday and Friday, killing or wounding several Israeli soldiers.

There was no independent confirmation of the claim by Fatah Uprising, led by Saad Musa, a dissident Palestinian leader opposed to Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasir Arafat.

# Israeli bullets claim two more Palestinian lives

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Bethlehem gave a martyr's funeral to an Arab killed by Israeli army gunfire, marking the joy of Eastern Orthodox Christians who on Sunday marked the birth of Jesus in the occupied West Bank town.

The memorial ceremony for Fadi Al Zabaki, 22, at the Church of the Nativity recalled the bleak celebrations of other Christmases during the nearly 25-month-old Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation.

Mukassed hospital in Arab Jerusalem said Zabaki died Sunday after being shot in the head by the army 10 days ago. Troops shot dead a second Palestinian Sunday near Tulkarm in the West Bank, residents said.

Bethlehem closed down for the funeral attended by 2,000 mourners. Soldiers barred journalists from Manger Square beside the church where the New Testament says Jesus was born.

Palestinians said Zabaki was an Eastern Orthodox Christian. His funeral passed without violence.

The American television network ABC, in Bethlehem on the day of the clash, showed Zabaki was in a group of masked stone-throwers but the circumstances of the incident were disputed.

The army said the soldiers adhered to a policy enabling them to open fire only if the masked men ignored commands to halt. But witnesses said there was no command.

Nusseibeh was reportedly turned back at the bridge while en route to Jordan and others had planned trips to Egypt, which has been consulting Palestinians about a set of 10 negotiators to meet with Israel.

Also included in the ban were Nabil's businessman Saeed Kamal, women's activist Zahra Kamal and a delegation of five Palestinian trade union leaders who were to attend a conference in Egypt, Palestinian sources said.

The London-based human rights group Amnesty International last week criticised army orders allowing troops to shoot at masked Arabs even when the soldiers' lives were not in danger.

Troops shot dead the second Palestinian in Attil village near Tulkarm, villagers said, raising to at least 610 the number of Palestinians killed by Israel since the revolt erupted in December 1987.

Residents identified the victim as Kamal Abu Khalil, 18. The army was checking the report.

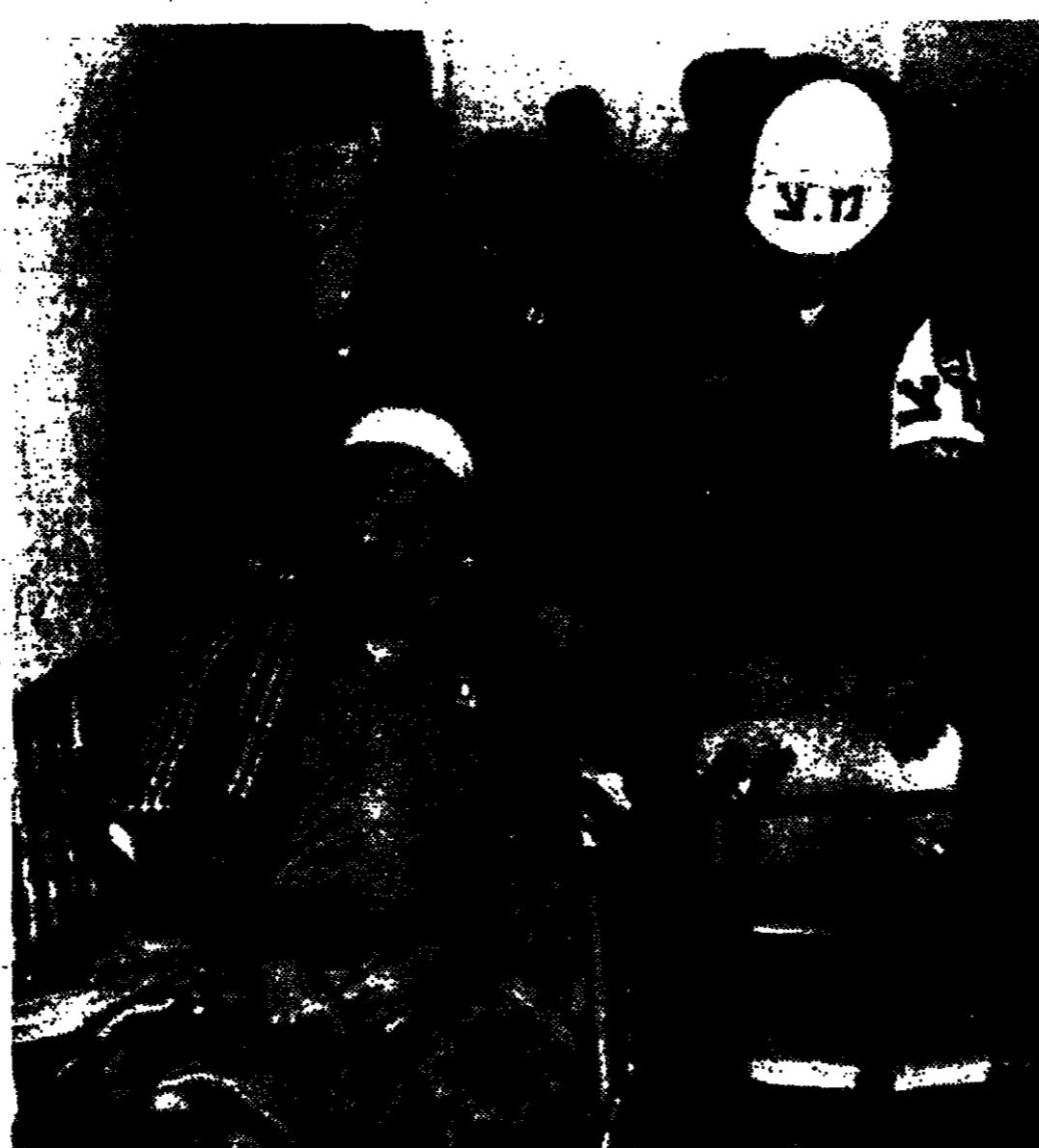
Military sources said troops clashed with masked youths in the West Bank village.

Troops were searching at the time for masked attackers who forced Arab workers off a bus and set it ablaze in nearby Ithran.

Palestinians have urged West Bank and Gaza Strip workers to boycott jobs in Israel.

Israeli postal authorities in Tel Aviv said they recovered several new letter bombs but declined to discuss their number or origin.

Last week they reported receiving



## Afghan rebel leader reports secret talks with Moscow

ISLAMABAD (AP) — A powerful Afghan rebel leader said Sunday that the guerrillas are holding secret talks with Moscow.

"Negotiations have already started between the Mujahideen (rebels) and the Soviets," said Gulbadin Hekmatyar, leader of the orthodox Hezb-e-Islami rebel group.

The rebel leader declined to say where the talks were being held, or who the participants were. However, he said the guerrillas were asking the Soviets to stop arming the government in the Afghan capital.

Soviet embassy officials in Islamabad could not be immediately reached for comment.

Western diplomats say Moscow sends about \$300 million worth of munitions and humanitarian aid to Kabul each month. Washington, meanwhile, provides \$500 million worth of military supplies annually to the rebels.

Hekmatyar's group is the only one of the seven major rebel organisations headquartered in

Pakistan to urge a mutual arms cutoff.

For more than a decade the rebels have been fighting to oust successive Communist governments. Until a year ago, they were also battling Soviet combat troops, who marched into Afghanistan in December 1979 to help crush a growing insurgency.

More than 163,000 Soviet soldiers fought alongside Afghan government troops a United Nations-brokered agreement providing for their withdrawal, which was completed last February.

Western diplomats say Moscow

has refused to speculate on the possible outcome, but said recent events in Eastern Europe "have created a lot of hopes that the Soviets can adopt similar policies in Afghanistan."

That was in reference to Moscow's non-interference in nations that moved in recent months to abandon single-party Communist rule.

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## Hostage families in Beirut

BEIRUT (AP) — The mother of two Swiss relief workers kidnapped in northern Lebanon four months ago arrived Sunday, bearing a petition with 70,000 signatures calling for their release. Jurg Enzinger, the spokeswoman for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) travelling with the family members, called the abduction of Emmanuel Christen and Eric Enriquez "inhuman, hurting victims the pain cannot bear to prove." Both men worked as orthopedic technicians at a Red Cross clinic in South Lebanon's port city of Sidon that provided artificial limbs to Lebanese and Palestinian war victims. The centre closed down right after the two technicians were kidnapped Oct. 6 in Sidon, 40 kilometers south of Beirut. The arriving family members were Mrs. Marie, Eric's twin sister; Christen's mother Marie-Madeleine and his sister Anne-Marie Meyer-Christen. They are accompanied by Christopher Hornbeck, the ICRC official responsible for the Middle East desk, and Angela Gmeinder, general delegate for the Middle East and North Africa.

two.

The clashes also forced the

closure Saturday of the museum crossing, the only gateway between the two sectors of the capital. Police said it was the second round of all-out civil war.

Police said the 45-minute flare-up along Beirut's five-kilometre demarcation line jolted residents of the low-income districts of Sodeco and Ras Al Nabaa out of bed at dawn.

Thousands scurried to basements and bomb shelters as the thunderous blasts of mortar and artillery shells echoed across the city.

Militias entrenched in Ras Al Nabaa accused soldiers of Aoun of starting the clash. Aoun's command said in a statement "Syria's surrogates" were behind the escalation.

Green line fighting Saturday

killed two civilians and wounded

a police spokesman.

"There is no

cohesive mechanism to curb the

Iranian-Moslem coexistence."

## Beirut fighting rekindles fears

AMAL AND HIZBOLLAH TO END FIGHTING

KARNAK, Lebanon (R)

— The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) deployed

more guerrillas in South Lebanon Sunday to separate battling Shi'ite militiamen as Syria and Iran called for an immediate ceasefire.

Security sources said some 100 men loyal to PLO leader Yasser Arafat moved into positions vacated by fighters of the pro-Iranian Hezbollah (Party of God).

The positions in Kfar Milkeh formed a small part of territory which Hezbollah seized from the Syrian-backed Amal militia in two weeks of fighting in the Iqlim Al Tufah area, 40 kilometers south of Beirut.

Clashes with mortars and machineguns continued in parts of Iqlim Al Tufah where the PLO has not deployed, the sources said.

In Damascus, Iran's First Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Ali Beheshti held talks with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa and representatives of

Amal and Hezbollah to find ways of ending the fighting.

A senior Iranian official

said Amal, from Kfar Hata.

Beheshti, who visited Lebanon and Syria last month, was expected in Beirut later Sunday.

The rival militias have largely ignored repeated appeals by

Damascus and Tehran to end the fighting for control of territory north of Israel's self-declared buffer strip in South Lebanon.

A peace agreement between

Amal and Hezbollah collapsed after Amal refused to allow Hezbollah fighters into the south, from where they can launch attacks against the Zionist state.

Palestinian officials said the PLO was trying to keep the fighting away from the "Ain Al Hawa and Michi" Palestinian refugee camps, only a few kilometers from the battle zone.

PLO sources said another goal

was to stop Hezbollah gaining ground in the direction of the camps, in case it linked up with anti-Arafat and Palestinian fundamentalist groups there.

"The people of my village have

started to return because the situation is improving," said Hassan Salman, from Kfar Hata.

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anti-Arafat and Palestinian fundamentalist groups there.

News agency reported.

The Social Democrats, another reform group, had announced

that six movements were banding together to boost their election chances.

But Bernd Gehrkes of United Left was quoted by ADN as saying his group was "misleadingly presented" in the announcement by the Social Democrats.

However, Gehrkes said his group was open to other alliances if suitable common policies can be worked out.

Social Democrat leader Steffen Reiche had said his party had joined

with New Forum, Democratic Awakening, Democracy Now, the Initiative for Peace and Human Rights and the United Left.

The 150 delegates from New Forum branches around the country have declared that election of individual, independent candidates was preferable to voting for political parties or alliances, and that New Forum candidates would rather run alone.

Regulations on campaigning

and balloting are to be set out

under a new election law, a draft

of which is expected to be published before Thursday's parliamentary session.

Differences among opposition

groups have also become appar-

ent during the weekly negotia-

tions among the various refor-

mance movements, the Communists and other political parties.

The talks were initiated Dec. 7

to provide a forum for drafting

reforms and airing the views of

the citizens' groups that have no

representation in the govern-

ment.

## Lebanon's poor face another bleak new year

By Simon Martin  
Reuters

**BEIRUT** — In the nightclubs and chic restaurants of Kaslik, you'd never know there was a war on.

After 14 years of civil strife in Lebanon, a surprising number of people in the country's Christian enclave still find the money to enjoy a night out in style.

But glossy magazines advertising watches, jewellery or Scotch whisky cater for the conspicuous consumption of a minority. The majority will face a new year of increasing deprivation or acute hardship, charity workers say.

"Before, there was a large middle class," said Maurice Abu Jaoudah, a voluntary worker at the Catholic Centre for Information.

"That class has almost disappeared, by emigration or by joining the ranks of the poor. The very rich stayed very rich."

Abu Jaoudah and Father Antoine Gemayel, director of the centre which coordinates church charity work, say the lifestyle of an affluent few is misleading.

An acute economic crisis exacerbated by the war has caused the average Lebanese on both sides of the green line dividing Beirut severe hardship, they say.

The minimum wage has just been raised to 35,000 Lebanese pounds (\$67) a month. An average unskilled worker can

expect to earn around 55,000 pounds (\$105).

All government schools in Christian east Beirut are full and a place at a private school costs around \$400 a year, Father Gemayel says. Many schools were hit in the six-month artillery war last year, reducing places still further.

The Roman Catholic charity Caritas, which operates throughout Lebanon, and other charities, help with fees. Parents also make great sacrifices to educate their children.

"They sell land, they do the impossible, to send their kids to school," Father Gemayel said.

Hospital care can also bankrupt a family. Every hospital in the Christian enclave and most in west Beirut were hit in the shelling.

East Beirut has three free hospitals but those forced to use private wards can expect to pay \$150 a day without surgery, Father Gemayel says.

Some half a million people have fled to the Christian enclave from other areas during the war, putting acute pressure on housing. Many ended up in Nabha, a teeming district of crumbling shell-pocked apartment and potholed roads next to the Beirut river.

Many refugees were agricultural workers without employment skills suitable for city life. Some 60 per cent of all Lebanon's factories were in any case damaged in the shelling war and Father Gemayel



A man and his wife hold machineguns in South Lebanon in support of the Amal militia in its fight against Hezbollah for domination of Lebanon's Shitate community

estimates unemployment at 22 per cent.

The figure would be dramatically worse but for the fact that some 850,000 people emigrated since the war started in 1975.

The Lebanese pound, around four to the dollar in 1985 and

540 this month, is chiefly to blame for the plight of Lebanese. Because the country produces so little of its needs, almost all prices rise with the dollar even though wages are in pounds.

"When the dollar goes up, prices go up. When the dollar comes down prices stay the same," said Abu Jaoudah.

A pair of shoes costs half an average worker's monthly salary. New clothes, left alone a new car, are an impossible dream for many.

## Israeli legislator calls for probe into Noriega 'adviser'

**TEL AVIV** (Agencies) — An opposition member of parliament has called for an official inquiry into former Israeli spy Mike Harari's links with ousted Panamanian leader Manuel Antonio Noriega.

But Harari, in his first television interview since U.S. forces invaded Panama, denied he was Noriega's right-hand man and described such reports as "disinformation and psychological warfare" against him.

Yossi Sarid, a left-wing member of the parliamentary foreign affairs and defence committee, said it must investigate Harari's role in Panama in recent years.

"There is no doubt that Harari was Noriega's right-hand man and we have to check if Noriega laundered drug money also with this right hand to clean it," Sarid said in a statement.

Harari told Israel Television he was a private businessman who had some civilian dealings in Panama and he only knew Noriega socially.

He said he was in Panama at the time of the U.S. military invasion on Dec. 20 but escaped on his own accord. Some reports said the U.S. had captured Harari but released him under pressure from Israel.

A former intelligence officer in Israel's Mossad, Harari resurfaced in Israel Friday when excerpts from his interview were shown on Israel Television. The full interview was screened Saturday.

"They said I was Noriega's adviser...I'm not an adviser, I wasn't in the past. I'm not number one and I'm not number two. Noriega is not a partner of mine," Harari said.

"I did not supervise his affairs. I did not supervise or train his forces. I did not organise his personal guard. I am simply a

private individual involved in business."

He said he decided to appear on television to dispel rumours and clear his name.

Harari, 62, was widely believed to have been a key adviser to Noriega and to have recruited and trained his bodyguard.

U.S. officials in Panama said last week that U.S. forces had captured Harari, but they later said there appeared to have been a mistake. Harari said he was in U.S. custody.

On Wednesday, the operational commander of the U.S. invasion force, Lieutenant-General Carl Stiner, said Harari had escaped U.S. forces looking for him and had fled to Israel.

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last week that U.S. forces had captured Harari, but they later said there appeared to have been a mistake. Harari said he was in U.S. custody.

Harari said he voluntarily resigned from "government service" in 1980 and became a private businessman.

"When I resigned, I decided not to deal with intelligence and security, because this is what I was doing in the past, and not to engage in weapons trade...I tried to deal in agriculture, promote housing and trade projects, and (sell) equipment but only civilian equipment," he said.

Harari described his relationship with Noriega as "friendly" and said:

"I knew Noriega as a wise, energetic, patriotic man, a cunning man who has an outstanding ability to survive, to make friends, to organise, to hold the reigns of power and coordinate state affairs."

"Noriega is an American creation...the Americans have created and developed and raised him. Noriega was pro-American and still is pro-American, I think, in spite of his present position," he said.

Harari indicated he thought the United States was behind media reports about his involvement in Panama, which he termed "a campaign of disinformation and psychological war against me."

He denied newspaper reports about his alleged trips to Colombia and Nicaragua, saying he had never visited these countries

"Several months after this young major was promoted to the rank of colonel and then led a coup in October 1968," deposing President Arnulfo Arias, Harari said.

Harari said he continued to visit the "great leader" Torrijos several times a year. During one of the visits, in 1980, Torrijos introduced him to Noriega. Shortly after, Torrijos was killed in an accident, and Noriega came to power three years later.

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## MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

### Iranian radical backs kidnappers

**NICOSIA** (R) — Former Iranian Interior Minister Ali Akbar Mohtashemi has publicly given his blessing to Lebanese kidnappers believed to be holding 17 Western hostages. "In my point of view," he told Tehran Times in an interview published Sunday, "Lebanese Sunnis, Shi'ites, Druze and Christians are the hostages of the United States, Israel and other Western powers."

"So it's their natural right to take hostages to inflict heavy blows on their enemies. No negotiations but force is the answer to what the enemies of the Lebanese have done against the deprived nation," said Mohtashemi, who was instrumental in forming the Iranian-backed Hizbullah in Lebanon. The fundamentalist group is believed despite its denials to be holding most of the 17 Westerners missing, presumed kidnapped, in Lebanon.

Mohtashemi, a hardliner dropped from the cabinet by reformist President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, was elected to parliament in a Tehran by-election last month.

### North Yemen denies Israeli claim

**SANA** (R) — North Yemen denied Sunday reports by an Israeli newspaper that it would consider allowing Israelis of Yemenite origin to visit relatives in their homeland. "North Yemen's policy does not allow anyone with Israeli or South African passports to visit Yemen. It also refuses entry to passport holders with Israeli or South African visa stamps," Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Iryani told Reuters. Israel's mass-circulation Yedioth Achronot newspaper said Friday leaders of the Yemenite Jewish community had received a message from Iryani saying he would consider positively requests to visit relatives. Iryani denied sending such a message. Some 43,000 of Yemen's 45,000 Jews moved to Israel in 1949 and 1950. Several hundred remain in North Yemen.

Security sources said Harari was escorted Noriega on an official visit to Israel in the early 1980s, was a useful go-between for Israel in Panama until his role became embarrassing when the United States sought to oust Noriega for alleged drug dealing.

Harari told Israel television he arrived in Panama by chance in the early 1968 and planned to spend 24 to 48 hours in the country.

"A Jewish friend offered me to meet a young major, in this case it was Omar Torrijos (Herrera)," Harari said, adding that Torrijos was described as a person interested in Israel.

Harari said he was reluctant, but then "I was pressed and asked...and when I met this personality, and I stress personality, chemistry was at work between us, and instead of 15 minutes I spent seven hours with him. We became friends."

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## Egypt urges Arabs to unite against Iran

**CAIRO** (Agencies) — Foreign Minister Esmar Abdul Meguid Sunday commanded Iraq's proposal for reviving stalled peace talks with Iran called on Arab leaders to form a "united Arab stance" against Tehran's refusal of the plan.

Abdul Meguid told reporters that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's offer reflected his country's wish for a peaceful end to the Iran-Iraq conflict.

His comments were carried by the Middle East News Agency.

"The peace initiative that President Saddam Hussein has announced reflects Iraq's peaceful attitude and its concern to establish a comprehensive peace," Abdul Meguid said.

"The initiative is a step which deserves commitment from all sides and we call on Iran to accept it. And Arab leaders should study the Iranian position in the case of its rejection of the initiative to create a united Arab stance against it," Abdul Meguid added.

A United Nations-sponsored ceasefire halted the eight-year

The Egyptian foreign minister did not specify what actions Arab leaders should take against the Iranian rejection.

Iran has already dismissed as a "campaign of public deception" Iraq's proposal for a direct dialogue between the two countries' leaders to be held alternately in Baghdad and Tehran under supervision of the United Nations.

Qatar, Algeria voice concern

Algeria and Qatar called on Sunday for a lasting peace agreement between Iran and Iraq, saying the current deadlock could harm all Gulf states.

"Continuation of this negative situation will harm the interests of... Iraq and Iran and the region," said a joint statement at the end of a three-day visit to Algeria by Qatar's emir, Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al Thani.

A United Nations-sponsored ceasefire halted the eight-year

Ernest Abdal Meguid

Gulf war in August 1988 but talks on a peace accord have stalled.

Their statement, quoted by the Qatari News Agency, expressed support for the Palestinian uprising and Palestinian demands for self-determination, including their own state.

It described Israeli tactics in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as inhuman and urged the world to stop troops violating international norms.

This weekend and was expected to raise the issue of free movement across the border for Azerbaijanis with Kremlin leaders.

The English-language Tehran Times said in an editorial Saturday:

"An agreement on free border crossing between the two governments... will greatly help to alleviate the seething emotions of people who wish to see their ancestral land and visit long-lost relatives."

The newspaper warned: "The Kremlin should avoid suppressing the Azerbaijani people at all costs."

It added: "Iranian authorities have already begun moves for preparing the grounds for Azerbaijanis to visit Iran's holy shrines and religious institutions."

IRNA said that following meetings between Iranians and Soviet officials in Moscow Friday, the two sides agreed to ease travel restrictions between the two countries and issue visas within 15 days. It did not say who these officials were.

Soviet Azerbaijan was acquired by Russia in the 1800s. In 1941, the Red Army moved into northern Iran and the Soviets set up a puppet state there. But after an international outcry, the troops pulled out in 1946.

According to a Foreign Ministry source who declined to be named Turkey's main aim in Kuwait will be to coax the Bulgarians to acknowledge formally the existence of a Muslim minority, if not a Turkish one.

## Arab-Americans emerging as political force — Zogby

By Marwan M. Shabot  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Arab-American community is moving towards the mainstream of the American political arena and making itself heard, possibly for the first time in the country's history, according to James Zogby, founder of the Arab-American Institute (AAI).

Zogby, who is here on a private visit, held a press conference Sunday to brief the press on the activities that his organization has been involved in. He also expressed his views, as a long-time lobbyist of Arab causes in America, on where he thinks America is going with its Middle East policy.

"We are not in the process of creating a counter lobby to the Israeli lobby in the United States. We are still in the pro-lobby stage but we do want to take part in American politics. As Arab-Americans we have the same right to do that as Italian-Americans or Greek-Americans or any other group of Americans," Zogby told the press conference.

An increased awareness of the technical aspects of the American political machinery, Zogby said, is helping Arab-Americans get the kind of "Alderman, legislative and senatorial help they need as American citizens. The "Arab" issues such as Lebanon and Palestine can now be lobbied for in the halls of the (Capitol) Hill rather than on the (White House) lawn."

"We have worked very hard to educate Arab-Americans about the workings of American democracy so they are aware of how to use it properly. It's a system that works, you just have to know how to use it."

"We now have several Arab-American organizations, some of which I co-founded, which are dealing with the various political aspects that are of concern to Arab-Americans and Arabs in the Middle East alike," Zogby said. "The Arab-American Institute is concerned with the specific area of electoral politics, the rules by which it works and advancing the electoral power in our advantages."

Although some people may not see the significance of such

work on the surface, in a democracy like America, it is vital if one wants issues brought to the surface. Voter registration, candidate training and Arab-American issues are among the areas on which the AAI concentrates," according to the lobbyist.

The intifada has been an essential pro-democratic factor in the Arab World and in other parts of the world, Zogby says.

"Eastern Europeans have said openly that the intifada had a direct impact on the events in Eastern Europe. The whole world is moving towards democracy and events here in Jordan, in Algeria, Tunisia, and Yemen all support that trend. Israel is the odd man out; it is the 'Conservative of the world.'

"Arab-Americans are more than willing to help their Arab brothers in the Middle East learn more about the techniques and tactics of democracy. I am here to say, 'we support you, we are with you, we express solidarity with your move,'" Zogby added.

Politics, says Zogby, is the key to the power of change in the American foreign policy towards the Middle East.

Although the American public has been drenched with Zionist propaganda for the last 60 years, Zogby says that several Arab leaders, including His Majesty King Hussein and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt enjoy more popularity among the American public than any Israeli leader past or present.

**The way to the heart'**

"While we, the Arab-Americans, work for the success of our interests within the American political arena, Arab leaders also have to change their approach to America. Arab heads of state should be less worried about speaking at the U.N. in New York or conversing privately with the U.S. president behind closed doors in Washington than they are. When Israeli leaders go to America, they organize huge rallies which thousands attend in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles and then they go to the White House. In America the way to the heart of the White House is through the people, you need grass-root support," says Zogby.

Zogby stressed that one of the reasons American politicians were paying more attention to Arab-Americans was that they were turning out in greater number at the polls and turning up more frequently in the American political arena.

The tactics used by the Israeli lobby, which have received wide news coverage in the past years, Zogby believes, only underline "the weakness of their moral position."

"Many congressmen fear the Israeli lobby, while many of them really like us. I would rather be liked than feared. Friendship will win over fear in the end," Zogby asserted.

He also referred to the campaign contributions made by the Israeli lobby to many congressmen, "when the Israeli lobby has to dish out \$100,000 for every congressman that they need to get (pro-Israel) legislation through, then I don't think those congressmen don't believe in Israel, they believe in money. Our role is to neutralise the role of money," Zogby asserts.

Zogby sees the latest U.S. "peace initiative" as "just another scenario in the Kissinger mold. It was to create an illusion of action where there is none. American leaders are simply not ready to make bold courageous moves yet."

"American politics can only change from within and Arab-Americans and Arab leaders alike have to work to make that change happen," Zogby asserted. "We are convinced now that we are just as intelligent and capable as the Jews in America; we have finally shed off the myth that our enemies had implanted in our minds for the longest time that, namely, that they are superior to us," he added.

"We still have a long way to go but day by day we are growing stronger. Every time we are successful the heathen rage — I say let them rage, we will only win more friends as a result," Zogby concluded.

*In the weekend issue of the Jordan Times, Zogby speaks to focus on people and elaborates further about Arab-Americans, U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and the future of American aid to Israel.*

**LOWER INTEREST?**: One of the promises made by the government is lower interest rates on loans extended for housing. But it is not clear yet whether the promised lower rate applied to housing units already built with loans granted by the Housing Corporation such as the Abu Neir estate (above). Photo by Yousaf Al 'Allan

## Iraqi parliament speaker in Amman

AMMAN (Petra) — Parliamentary relations between Jordan and Iraq and ways to promote them were discussed Sunday in a meeting held between parliamentary delegations representing the two countries. The Jordanian side was headed by Lower House of Parliament Speaker Suleiman Arar and the Iraqi side by Iraqi National Assembly Speaker Saad Madi Saleh.

The meeting also focused on the meeting of the four-member Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) parliamentary committee to be convened in Baghdad by the end of January.

Saleh arrived earlier Sunday and was received in the airport by Arar.

In a statement he gave to the press upon arrival, Saleh said that parliamentary life in Jordan is unique, and that Jordan's step in

reviving parliamentary life is considered to be an important transition.

Saleh said Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's peace plan is one of recent several offered by the president since the war started between Iran and Iraq. "These proposals show Iraq's willingness to achieve peace with Iran," he said. Saleh said that Hussein's proposal was welcomed on the Arab and international levels. But, he added, "the Iraqis as they usually do rejected the initiative and questioned its credibility."

Saleh expressed his hope that Iranian officials be more reasonable in order to reach a real peace, settlement. Saleh is accompanied in his visit by Iraqi parliamentarian Faig Makki Ahmad.

## Ministry seeks to boost Saudi Arabian tourism

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Tourism Abdul Karim Al Kabariti discussed with a visiting Saudi delegation here Sunday prospects of boosting the number of Saudi Arabian nationals visiting Jordan's tourist sites and spa.

The delegation group represented by the Saudi Arabian television, Saudi, the Saudi Arabian Airlines, tourist and travel offices and journalists.

The minister briefed the delegation on Jordan's tourist attractions, archaeological sites and spa as well as summer resorts

and facilities offered to tourists. Discussions also covered facilities, customs offices and border posts offered to tourist groups visiting Jordan. They also discussed the prospect of holding tourist exhibitions to market Jordan's attractions in Saudi Arabia.

The minister Sunday also met with French Ambassador to Jordan Denis Bouchard and discussed French-Jordanian cooperation in tourism and archaeology. Kabariti thanked the French government for its help in archaeological excavations in the Kingdom.

## NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

**HOUSE RURAL COMMITTEE TO MEET:** Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Suleiman Arar has called the House's Rural and Badia Committee for a meeting Tuesday to elect a chairman and a rapporteur. The legal committee is to convene Monday to discuss the cancellation of a law on the Amman Development Department and amendments to the apartment blocks law, the foreigners and alien law and the occupied Arab affairs law. A parliamentary committee set up to investigate the clashes at Yarmouk University will hold a meeting Tuesday (Petra).

**HOUSE SESSION POSTPONED:** The Lower House of Parliament will hold its next session Saturday instead of Tuesday, Speaker Suleiman Arar said Sunday. No reason was given for the delay.

**NEW MOSQUE OPENED:** Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ali Al Faqih Sunday opened a new mosque at Mafraq district. The minister prayed at the mosque and delivered a speech on the occasion. The opening of the Maktoum Abu Jamous mosque was attended by a number of government officials, who said that the construction cost amounted to JD 90,000 (Petra).

**WORLD CYCLISTS IN JORDAN:** Two Indonesian cyclists, who left their country in November 1987 on a world tour, are now in Jordan, the ninth stop in their round the world trip. Mohammad Amin Pawzi and Ahmad Hannadani said they were happy to visit Jordan from which they will head towards Iraq and then Saudi Arabia and Kuwait before going on to Africa and the Americas (Petra).

**JORDANIAN PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION:** A total of 52 pharmacists Sunday were sworn in as members of the Jordanian Pharmacists Association before Health Minister Mohammad Abdouh Al Zaben. Following the swearing ceremony, there was a general discussion on the association's programme, difficulties encountered by Jordanian pharmacists and cooperation with the Ministry of Health (Petra).

**AQABA JOBS:** Employment seekers in Aqaba district in the past year totalled 1,350, and work was found for 1,202 of them, according to a labour department in Aqaba. The department Director Jamal Abu Tayeh said that work permits to non-Jordanians in the past year totalled 2,474, down from 4,603 in the previous year (Petra).

**U.S. LABOUR AID:** U.S. Ambassador to Jordan Roscoe Suddeth Sunday visited minister of labour Qassem Obaidat to discuss American assistance to Jordan in labour-related fields. Their discussion dealt with vocational training for Jordanians and ways to stem unemployment and support private sector projects (Petra).

**SAPLINGS DISTRIBUTED:** The Department of Agriculture in Tafilah district has started distributing fruit and forest tree seedlings to organisations and individuals in the governorate of Tafilah to be planted during the current agricultural season. The seedlings are being planted in the semi-arid as well as arable lands to stem encroachment of the desert. Jordan is to celebrate Arbor Day Jan. 15. Various tree-planting ceremonies will be held around the Kingdom to mark the day (Petra).

**MAAN SPENT JD 58,000:** Maan Municipality reported Sunday that it spent JD 58,000 on various services projects in the past year. The funds were spent on road building, the construction of retaining walls at several places and lighting of streets (Petra).

## WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

### EXHIBITIONS

- \* An exhibition entitled "They chose 30 poets" at the French Cultural Centre.
- \* An art exhibition by Irish artist Conal McIntyre at the British Council.

## ARABIC FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

The Language Centre at the University of Jordan announces that the intensive course in Modern Standard Arabic for speakers of other languages will commence on Jan. 27, and will last for 16 weeks. The programme is intensive and classes meet in the morning for 20 hours per week, Saturday-Wednesday. The fee for the course is JD 140. The evening course is non-intensive and classes meet six hours per week.

Those interested please call at the Language Centre for registration.

## WANTED

A foreign economic institution wants to employ a Jordanian male with the qualification as follows:

1. University graduate
2. Minimum 4 year experience in the field of economic & commercial research as well as local administration
3. Excellent command of Arabic & English in writing and speaking

Please interested applicants submit C.V. with 2 pictures, diploma and letter of recommendation to:

P.O. Box 926529, Amman, Jordan until January 13, 1990. Documents will not be returned.

## Government to study ownership of press

By Rabah Masso  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government of Prime Minister Mudar Badran plans to reexamine the status of the Jordanian press and reconsider the question of newspaper ownership, Minister of Information Ibrahim Izzeddin said Sunday.

The prime minister has specifically stated that there should be a clearly defined concept separating ownership of newspapers and freedom of expression, Izzeddin said in a statement to Al Ra'i and the Jordan Times.

So far, the government has made the chief editor the sole responsible person for the respective newspaper and "now we are following in the footsteps of the former government of Sharif Zeid Ben Shakir in reconsidering the ownership of all Jordanian newspapers," Izzeddin added.

He said separation between ownership of a newspaper and

editorship should mean no pressure on free expression in writing.

Asked whether the government had detailed plans for a new set up in the press, the minister said, that the government "will inevitably re-examine the newspaper ownership question, but so far it has not formulated a detailed decision on this issue."

On Dec. 11, the Economic Security Committee (ESC) reversed a decision taken in August 1988 to assume administrative and editorial control of the country's three major newspaper establishments. Subsequently, the management of the three establishments — Al Ra'i, Al Dustour and Sawt Al Shaab, which was originally established as a public shareholding company.

The ESC's Dec. 11 decision said that the new boards of directors would be entrusted with the task of developing the role of the press in light of the new openness in the press.

The ESC statement said the new arrangement was limited for a period of one month, during which special arrangements will be taken to elect new boards of directors.

As the date for the board's meetings gets closer, questions have been raised about the reason behind the lack of an official decision about the government's shares in the three papers.

The government became a major share holder of the three papers Jan. 1, 1986, after transforming the papers from private into public shareholding companies.

The government owns 61 percent of the shares of Al Ra'i Arabic daily, 53 percent of Al Dustour and 85 percent of Sawt Al Shaab, which was originally established as a public shareholding company.

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## Two private universities to accept students in 1990

AMMAN (J.T.) — Two private universities will open their doors for students at the start of the 1990-1991 academic year with a joint capacity of 2,600 students, according to spokesmen for the two universities quoted by the Al Ra'i Arabic daily Sunday.

Approval was given by the Council of Higher Education last July for the establishment of the Amman Private University in the Balqa Governorate and the University of Applied Sciences in Amman area.

The Amman Private University and the University of Applied Sciences will raise to six the total number of universities in Jordan.

The four existing universities are government-controlled.

The paper quoted Dr. Ahmad Hourani from the Amman Private

University as saying that at least 2,000 male and female students would be accepted in the coming academic year, half of whom would be Jordanian expatriates. "We will start off with three faculties — commerce, law and arts — and the students will pay fees totalling JD 1,500 annually like fees for other college in the University of Jordan, Mut'a University, Yarmouk University and the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST)," Hourani said.

He said Jordanian students would pay their fees in the local currency but the expatriates would have to pay in U.S. dollars. So far, the Amman Private

University has contracted 50 teachers from Jordan and other Arab countries to teach at the university, Hourani said.

He said that work was under way at the permanent site of the university at the Saru district, about 10 kilometres west of Amman, and there were prospects for completing construction work by May 30, 1990.

He said the university was being set up on 60 dunums of land and could be easily reached from Salt, Amman and Zarqa, which are the main population centres in the Kingdom. He said the Jordanian United Investment Company, which owns the university, had allocated JD 5 million as initial capital for the new institution.

## Ministry to concentrate on development in badia area

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Agriculture will give special attention to the development of the badia region and is currently making plans and executing programmes for the development of pasture areas in the semi-desert regions, Minister of Agriculture Suleiman Arabyat said Sunday.

All programmes in the badia region will be geared towards achieving socio-economic development and improving the living standards of the area's residents, the minister said during an inspection tour of the region, which included the Shomari and Al Azraq wild reserves and Al Kharrash, about 50 kilometres east of Amman. He was briefed on farm lands in the area by local officials.

Cooperation between local governors and residents is of paramount importance in order to ensure the implementation of development schemes sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture, Ara-

biyat said.

He said special attention was given to cooperatives at Azraq, where livestock projects are being initiated and irrigation schemes are being launched.

Ministry of Agriculture officials accompanying Arabyat on the inspection tour said that the Azraq oasis was estimated to be 300,000 dunums in area, part of which was planted with some 80,000 shrubs over the past two years by Ministry of Agriculture teams to help create pasture lands. This year, the ministry plans to grow shrubs on an additional 20,000 dunums, they said.

Shomari and Azraq wildlife reserves are among seven reserves in Jordan serving as a natural habitat for several species of animals threatened with extinction. The two reserves are under the control of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), which has been in contact with Arab and foreign countries to rehabilitate rare species

RSCN officials said that a number of world organisations concerned with the conservation of nature were contemplating the idea of transforming the Shomari wildlife reserve into a centre for conducting scientific research for producing improved breeds of animals threatened with extinction and to supply breeds to Arab countries in the region.

The minister's tour of the badia region came at a time when the Ministry of Agriculture is preparing to plant millions of fruit and forest tree saplings marking Arbor Day Jan. 15. Most of the trees this year, the Ministry of Agriculture said, will be planted at the edge of the desert in Jordan to stem desertification.

## SOME PEOPLE DON'T TAKE STUDYING BY MAIL SERIOUSLY

## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation Established 1975

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## Peaceful transitions

AT a time when the world is celebrating the demise of the Communist order in Eastern Europe and halting the introduction of pluralism in its place, it is fair and proper to pause for a minute to pay a tribute to the socialist order for bringing about positive changes within the capitalist world. Lest mankind forgets, it was the threat of communism and the challenge of socialism that prompted the capitalist order to reform from the laissez faire stage to a market economy tinged with some elements of socialism in order to meet the pressing needs of poverty, unemployment, health insurance or education. Thus it is in order to recognise the great effects of socialism on capitalism at a time when mankind is burying with great fanfare the unadulterated form of communism.

Historians, political scientists and economists would probably attribute the end of communism to its inability to reform and adapt in the direction of capitalism as capitalism had successfully done in the direction of socialism. Had the communist order evolved and developed as capitalism had done, it would have probably converged with market economy systems somewhere half way and in the end survived the test of time. Instead it opted to remain stiff and uncompromising until the bitter end. Its fossilised concepts and inflexibility to adopt new and innovative ways to cope with new situations and conditions enslaved it with iron chains to worn-out and rigid guidelines. What ever possessed Communism to think that a socio-economic order which suited it decades ago can still serve it well in a completely new world is the question that will occupy the minds of historians for many generations.

And for how long its remnants can stay away from crumbling is open to conjecture. The last strongholds of communism can still save themselves from the inevitable if they begin to incorporate the seeds of change and evolution and start the long road towards contemporary ways of government and functional means to run their economies. This could be the safest and wisest route to their salvation and the surest way to avoid the kind of chaos and instability that usually ensue from and accompany abrupt changes in the political and economic order of any given country. The extent that these remaining bastions of pure and simple communism are willing to implement changes within their infrastructure will determine their capacity to survive the ordeals awaiting them. The dreadful experience of Romania must be avoided and evaded. It is therefore the hope and aspiration of all mankind that peaceful transitions in all forms of rigid rule can be given a chance to preempt more violent revolutions.

## ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i Arabic daily discussed the 1990 fiscal budget which was presented to parliament Saturday and said that it is designed to help Jordan adapt to the economic reform programme which is bound to help stimulate the national economy and restore stability. But the paper said that the government needs to place controls on spending and eliminate any excesses beginning with government departments; and has to introduce steps that could help solve the problem of unemployment as demanded by parliament. What is also needed at the moment is a wide-scale campaign to spread awareness among members of the public for rationalisation in various fields and for curtailing unnecessary expenses as part of the general effort to reinvigorate the national economy, the paper noted. The budget manifested the high cost of living in Jordan and pointed to the fact that many Jordanians are finding it difficult to cope with soaring prices and to make both ends meet, said the paper. Therefore, it said, the deputies ought first to give a good example to the masses by adopting austerity measures to be applied first on themselves, and also to make serious efforts in their discussions to find means of alleviating the sufferings of a broad sector of the low-income groups among Jordanians.

A columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily draws public attention to the fact that Iran and Israel the two enemies of the Arab nation might resort to aggression on Iraq to stem the growing Arab strength. Abdul Rahim Omar notes that Iran which has rejected Saddam Hussein's peace offer realises too well that it has no other alternative except to launch a desperate aggression on Iraq or to live peacefully with its Arab neighbour. The writer says that Iraq will no doubt continue to seek a permanent peace with Iran, and thanks to its military superiority, it will no doubt repel any aggression on Arab soil. The writer draws attention to Israel's aggressive policies towards the Arab nation and notes that Israeli rulers, using American weapons, might resort to another aggression on Iraq. But, he adds, this time the Iraqis will prove to the world that they can deal with any sort of aggression on its territory, as it continues to develop its technological skills and military arsenal which is feared by the enemies of the Arab nation. The writer says that Israel has always been maintaining its strategy on the basis that it must possess power equal to, or surpassing that of the whole strength of the Arab nation, but, he adds, Tel Aviv has now begun to realise that this state of affairs no longer exists.

Al Dustour daily newspaper voiced optimism on the success of the national economic reform programme in the Kingdom. The paper said that the modest success so far achieved over a short period of time is sufficient to give us optimism, especially since success was achieved under very difficult conditions in the Kingdom. The paper said the Minister of Finance's statement on the fiscal budget outlining the government's orientation in the coming year, and the plans to rationalise public expenditure all point to a prospective future and an era marked with success in many fields. The paper referred in particular to the minister's statement that Jordan has already begun to overcome the serious challenges that faced the Kingdom in the past year, and has already gone some way towards stimulating the national economy by providing the essential foreign exchange and replenishing the treasury with foreign currency needed to finance essential imports for development.

## Monday's Political Pulse

### Peres must put his foot down

RECENTLY Israel's Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres made a persuasive and poignant rebuttal to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir over the latter's decision to diminish Ezer Weizman's role in the cabinet for allegedly making contacts with the PLO. Peres reminded Shamir that it was he and his Likud partners that had torpedoed Jordan's role in the peace process two years ago and effectively removed it as a principal interlocutor. And now Shamir, Peres warned, wants to remove also the PLO from the peace process just as mischievously as he had done vis-a-vis Jordan in the past. That is why, Peres postulated, Shamir wants the PLO also out of the way in order to leave the Arab side with no real party to negotiate over the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and become an easier prey to Shamir's machiavellian designs.

But if that is the way Peres sees the situation, why on earth does he and his Labour Party keep on procrastinating over their chronic threats and immobility to part company with the Likud Party. Does he want to wait until there are no more peaceful options left on the negotiating table and the centrist position of the Palestinian side is undermined beyond repair and hope before he makes his move? True, the Labour Party fears national elections in Israel at this time, because the tide is moving against it

and prefers therefore not to rock the boat now. But wouldn't a decision now to precipitate a governmental crisis in Israel serve as the very catalyst that could galvanise the Israeli public opinion in the direction of reasonable accommodation with the Palestinian side and shake them up from their political slumber or lethargy? Is it outrageous and untenable to argue that by sharing power with the Likud the Labour Party is in effect consolidating the position of the Likud? By helping it to dig deeper into the fabric of Israeli body politic? Alas, every time Peres and his colleagues had an ample opportunity and a just cause to rock the boat in Israel they opted to stay calm and collected and at the end many opportunities to break the deadlock and confusion within Israel was given yet another stay of execution.

If Peres and his party are sincere about waging peace and find a lot things wrong with Shamir's perspectives on peace with the Palestinians and the neighbouring Arab states, then now is the time to shake up Israel by precipitating a governmental crisis that would force the Israelis to make the kind of hard choices that they have been avoiding for much too long. The worse that could happen to Peres and his Labour Party if they withdraw from Shamir's government is to play second fiddle for the time being in

the Israeli political decision-making process. But that is exactly what they are doing anyway. At best they would have given peace between their people and the Arabs a real chance to get it off-centre.

Yes this is an invitation to Peres to put his foot down and carry out his pledge to negotiate peace with the Arab side on terms that reason and justice would tolerate. Otherwise the stalemate would drag on for ever and ever and the chances of peace in the Middle East would become the real and ultimate victim. Meanwhile the Arab side, the Palestinians included, must prepare the groundwork for the ultimate jettisoning of Shamir and his clique from the politics of the Middle East by playing their cards rationally and wisely. There is no doubt that the Arab parties have now a vested interest in supporting the voices of reason within Israel to get rid of extremism from their mainstream. If such a process requires synchronisation with the elements of moderation and fair play within Israel then be it. The people of the Middle East can no longer wait for miracles to descend on them from heaven or from Washington, or anywhere else for that matter, but instead must work together to bring down the forces of obstructionism and march forward to wage real peace on the basis of justice, equity and legitimacy.

### A status quo strategy will no longer do

By Yitzhak Oren

**AMBIGUITY** is in the nature of human affairs; new departures in international relations hold the potential of promise as well as of complications and danger. This is so as regards current events in Eastern Europe; and it is no less the case with the Syrian-Egyptian rapprochement, as it affects Arab-Israeli relations. Here, as always and everywhere, the difference in the realisation of potential will be made by the actors concerned.

Israel must reorient itself continuously in its strategic environment. What need concern us most is that we ourselves are a major actor, that it is for us to contribute to the shaping of the future — decisively if possible. The real question for us is not what others but what we ourselves want and can do. As a famous American once wrote: If you want to know what the future holds, you have to go towards it.

As regards the peace process, what is promise for one Israeli is danger for another. Thus it must be said that promise means peace with security, even though Israel will have to pay for it with what is dear to all of us.

Basically, promise is inherent in the progress towards the fulfilment of Ben-Gurion's two primary

conditions for a peace process: first, that the Arabs come to realise that Israel cannot be destroyed by main force and that, for their own good, they must settle the conflict peacefully; and second, that both the U.S. and USSR must want peace to be made.

That Damascus went to Cairo on Cairo's terms, pushed by Moscow's new Middle East policy of "no to war and yes to peace," means that such progress has taken place, though more on Russia's part than Syria's.

There is no opposite pole to Cairo, the leader of the Arab peace strategy. Thus both Cairo and its strategy have been strengthened. Mubarak may benefit internally as well — although the economic and fundamentalist threat won't go away.

As for the Syrians, while former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's initiative remains a mistake for Assad, we should test the hypothesis that Syria's reconciliation with the Arab champion of peace may signify a certain positive change towards peace itself, and that, with the Syrian flag flying not far from ours in Cairo, Syria may become more accustomed to it in the future.

The major new obstacle to the peace process may arise from Damascus' ability to operate now

from within the Arab pragmatic camp. It will be in a much better position to insist that the Golan Heights be included in a comprehensive and simultaneously implemented settlement or, alternatively, to foil the peace process altogether. While in the past Cairo had no need to exert itself on behalf of Syria, it must now be expected to back Syria's demands, although it may try to mitigate them somewhat.

For Yasser Arafat and the PLO, new constraints on independent progress may arise, with or without reconciliation with Assad. The USSR will support Syria's demands, and the U.S. too will want a settlement of the Golan question. The international conference plan will gain more and more support.

Israel can legitimately pose three conditions: direct negotiations (even if these are held under international auspices), Syrian recognition of Israel, and full peace. Today Assad certainly seems unready to accept any of them.

For such conditions to be internationally accepted as serious and reasonable, we would have to indicate what we ourselves are ready, in principle, to concede.

Should the above scenario come to pass, it would mean that the step-by-step strategy that has

guided the whole peace process, from 1973-4 on, has come to an end or will at least encounter great obstacles. This strategy was conceived of as a progression from the relatively easy to the harder and the most problematic issues, while providing time for getting accustomed to the ideas of peace, confidence-building and trial periods.

Thus, Egypt was first, and Jordan and the Palestinians were to follow suit. Then, it was assumed, isolated Syria would either stay isolated or follow suit too. (Last, and least — Lebanon would follow in Syria's footsteps). The fiasco of our peace agreement with Lebanon proved that the common wisdom in this respect was genuine wisdom.

In any case, Jerusalem and the Golan were to come last. Now the whole process may telescope.

Should no progress be achieved, Syria may find itself in a position to make gradual gains for an inter-Arab strategy of confrontation, to be based on a Cairo-Damascus axis. This is also what the Egyptian left and a good a portion of the centre advocate. The objective would be to establish a more favourable political-military balance of power to enforce, in time, a settlement either by power-backed political means or, eventually, with the aid of armed

confrontation.

To be sure, various actors and issues can be expected to intervene in these scenarios in unforeseeable ways, among them Arab divergencies and conflicts, including rifts between Cairo and Damascus, Iraq with its growing power, leadership changes, internal upheavals, economic constraints and incentives, events in the periphery of the area and in the world at large.

What influence these would have on our affairs will depend to a great extent on what we make of them in the framework of our own strategic aims. In any case, we will have to deal with the main issues. The major effort should still be directed at dealing with the Palestinian issue first — and urgently. Doubtless we will have to concern ourselves with the Golan as well.

There is one lesson we have had plenty of opportunity to learn — and painfully. The status quo will not do; the conflict will not remain static. It will either be moved forward towards a political settlement or slide backwards toward confrontation, endangering our peace with Egypt too.

The potential new hostilities and dangers have arisen because we have refused to deal realistically with the Palestinian issue; we have conducted a status quo

strategy, a strategy of immobility. Because of it we have lost the advantages — the components of power — that a state is afforded by initiative and movement. Our immobility has led to two wars started by the other side, the Yom Kippur war and the intifada. The peace with Egypt was initiated by Sadat, while our own single try at a political move, by Shimon Peres, was foiled by his partners in the government.

The one big initiative we have taken since June 1967, when we began to wait for a phone call from the other side, was the Lebanon war. But it was out of touch with Middle East and world realities. The plan for elections in territories, as it stands in practice, amounts only to a tactical reversion to the intifada.

The longer we continue with immobility, with a reactive policy, the weaker we will grow.

Strategically, our military might notwithstanding, and the more potential dangers we will encounter, the Syrian-Egyptian rapprochement calls for a national reappraisal, internal as well as external — The Jerusalem Post.

The writer, a commentator on Middle East affairs, is a former head of the Shiloh (now Dayan) Research Centre, and has served in the Israel embassy in Cairo.

### After loosing everything else can Noriega win legal war?

By Arthur Spiegelman  
Reuter

**NEW YORK** — Here's a plan for Manuel Antonio Noriega to go free: Prove that your country was invaded, you were kidnapped, brought to a country where you are hated to be tried illegally on charges made by common criminals out to cut a deal.

Some U.S. lawyers think that under this interpretation of the Panamanian military leader's downfall, he may beat the rap — that if he can find 12 jurors who have never heard of him, Panama or cocaine.

They say that if Noriega wins

letting the cartel launder millions of dollars in profits in Panama banks.

The experts say the U.S. government will have to prove in the courts that Noriega was not grabbed illegally, that its evidence against him is not tainted and that, despite Bush calling him a "thug" and the U.S. Defense Department describing him as a "wily rat," he can receive a fair trial.

They also say that giving the former强人 "due process of law" is going to prove a long, hard process, especially when it comes to convincing the government to free classified documents about his dealings as an asset of the Central Intelligence Agency at \$200,000 a year.

Oddly enough, many experts say the government should have no problem with the argument that Noriega was kidnapped.

"Under U.S. law, even if you kidnap someone, as long as he is physically before the court, you can try him," said Sam Dash, counsel to the Senate Watergate hearings. "The position is: We don't care how he got there. I'm sure the defense will appeal but they'll lose all the way to the Supreme Court."

But the government may have a problem using the evidence it found against Noriega in his headquarters, including his records and ashes of cocaine, because of the constitution's prohibitions against illegal searches, says Colleen O'Connor, spokeswoman for the American Civil Liberties Union.

The government may also have trouble with their witnesses against Noriega — drug dealers who are testifying against him in the hopes of securing better deals for themselves.

One legal expert, Paul Kahn of Yale University, said that given all the problems in the case, he would not be surprised if the U.S. government made a deal with Noriega.

Another expert, who asked not to be identified, said, "the U.S. may rue the day when it brought this case."

William Kunstler, the dean of America's "radical" attorneys, goes a step further. He says the United States wanted to kill Noriega and having failed at that are now stuck with him and a mess of illegalities in trying him.

"Noriega has to show relevance (in bringing such incidents into evidence)," Dinges said. "He can't just say, I was a CIA agent and everything I did was for the CIA."

"This has never happened before in modern history — one country invades another to arrest its leader. Can you imagine the

defence will call upon the CIA and security forces to produce information that they say is needed to allow Noriega to properly defend himself. The government then has a choice. It can't prosecute him on the one hand, and preserve national security information on the other."

Dash says he anticipates that one tricky issue will be the defense's demand for classified documents on Noriega's relationship with the CIA in the early 1980s on matters of military intelligence.

He added: "The president has stuck his neck out so far, I think they'll turn over everything that's requested."

### Washington's skeletons could come out at Noriega trial

By Deborah Zabarenko  
Reuter

**WASHINGTON** — Manuel Antonio Noriega's drug trafficking trial could let some of President George Bush's political skeletons out of the cupboard and fill in details of U.S. support for the toppled Panamanian ruler during the Reagan years.

Noriega, now in jail in Miami awaiting trial on narcotics charges after surrendering in Panama Wednesday, for years enjoyed the enthusiastic backing of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Many details of U.S. support for Noriega are already public knowledge, revealed in probes of the Iran-contra scandal by Congress and in the trial last year of former White House aide Oliver North.

The administration has done a damage assessment and decided that (Noriega's trial testimony) won't be any more embarrassing than what has already come out in the Iran-contra scandal," said John Dinges, a Latin American analyst and author of a book on Noriega called *Our Man in Panama*.

Dinges told Reuters Noriega will be hard-pressed to bring up incidents at the trial that could hurt Bush and other U.S. officials.

"Noriega has to show relevance (in bringing such incidents into evidence)," Dinges said. "He can't just say, I was a CIA agent and everything I did was for the CIA."

"But Noriega's trial could refresh the public memory about how close Panama's self-styled "maximum leader" was to the

wrote to Noriega in May 1986, "I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my deep appreciation for the vigorous anti-drug policy that you have adopted." A Senate report said Noriega later shared DEA intelligence with drug traffickers.

He once offered to assassinate the entire Sandinista leadership in Nicaragua in exchange for U.S. help in shoring up his public image, according to a government summary of events released at North's trial. The summary said North declined Noriega's offer but said the Panamanian could blow up certain Nicaraguan targets.

Noriega's lawyer, Steven Kolkin, predicted in a televised interview that media coverage of the invasion and Noriega's surrender made it nearly impossible to seat an impartial jury.

But William Bennett, who heads Bush's Office of National Drug Control Policy, said the publicity would guarantee fairness, saying

# Features

## A country on the mend

By Jerome Koechlin

This is the second in a two-part series on Namibia

**OSHAKATI,** Namibia — Sitting on his hospital bed in Oshakati, a small town in northern Namibia, his torso and left arm in a cast, 28-year-old Likies Shikango Uzambala tells of the 10 years he spent as a guerrilla fighter in the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), the military branch of the South African People's Organisation (SWAPO).

"On April 6 this year, I was in the Ondangwa region with seven other fighters of the PLAN. I got hit by shrapnel from a mortar rocket fired by the South African army. I was hit in the left arm, the bones were shattered, but thank God, I was alive," he recalls.

Alive, but barely. He lost a lot of blood while two of his companions transported him to Ondangwa hospital, where he claims treatment was inadequate. In May, he was transferred to Oshakati in a Swiss medical unit operating with the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), the U.N. body in charge of overseeing Namibia's accession to independence. Uzambala underwent several operations and hopes his ordeal will soon be over.

He was part of an operation

launched on April 1 by SWAPO leader Sam Nujoma. Defying a U.N. peace agreement he previously had agreed to, Nujoma ordered about 1,200 guerrilla fighters to leave their camps in Angola to move into Ovambo land, just one day before the Blue Berets of the U.N. peace keeping forces were due to arrive in Namibia.

Interviewed shortly before, Nujoma had said that Namibia's independence was finally on the horizon, after a century of bitter fighting. But SWAPO's decision to move in almost killed the peace accord as it prompted UNTAG to allow South Africa's troops back into action. The operation was a disaster for SWAPO: losses were estimated at 300 men killed and hundreds more wounded.

Behind his dark glasses, Uzambala persists in saying it was worth it. "Since the war broke out 23 years ago, there hasn't been a real border between Angola and Namibia," he explains. "As fighters in the PLAN, we used to come and go as we pleased, depending on our orders... As a matter of fact, I am of the Ovambo tribe so I spent most of my time as a guerrilla fighter in Ovamboland. I would go into Angola either because the Koekoek (South African troops) pushed us back, or to take time off, in Luanda or Lobito."

Also an Ovambo, Nujoma has the support of most of his people who number about 650,000 out of a population of 1.3 million. In the November independent election SWAPO scored 92 per cent of the votes in the Ovamboland district.

SWAPO's April offensive was strongly criticised by Anton Lubowski, the only white member of SWAPO's Central Committee who was assassinated last September in Windhoek in circumstances that remain unclear. "This invasion was a serious mistake," he was quoted as saying. "Looking back on it, it never should have happened."

The operation was the last in a long series. Since 1976-77 when the fighting intensified, the war has killed at least 1,000 people a year. Comments Uzambala grimly: "I don't know how many people I have killed. In the bush, all you hear is cries and whispers. I used to pray to God every day for help."

Fighting in the PLAN is a tradition in Uzambala's family. In 1966, during the first confrontation between SWAPO and the South African police forces in Ovamboland, his father was among the rebels. In neighbouring Angola, the establishment in 1975 of a Marxist regime backed by Cuban soldiers and the Soviet Union allowed SWAPO to become entrenched and build camps on the Angolan side of the

border.

Four years after that, while he was still a pupil at a secondary school in Zambia, Uzambala decided to follow in the footsteps of his father and two of his brothers. "What prompted me to join the PLAN was my desire to fight and free Namibia of the foreign domination it had suffered for dozens of years," he explains. "The South African regime took our land, harassed our people and exploited our resources."

Uzambala is an enthusiastic SWAPO follower. The walls of the hospital room he shares with two other wounded fighters are covered with Nujoma portraits and SWAPO pamphlets. "For me, Nujoma is the father of Namibian independence. He is the breath, the soul of our struggle and if he were to order me to take up arms again, I wouldn't hesitate for a minute. I am a fighter, I am used to living in the bush," he says proudly. When some of his PLAN friends come and visit him, their card-playing is often interrupted by triumphant fans pushing the air.

Despite his wounds he was able to have a say in the recent election: UNTAG and Pretoria's representative, General Administrator Louis Pienaar, had made special arrangements for invalids and bed-ridden people who were visited by officials taking their vote. Says Uzambala as he looks to the

future: "When I get out of here, I hope to find a job fast. But I have

no special skills, I only know how to fight." Like a majority of

Namibians, Uzambala can barely

read or write. He and his country

are at the threshold of a new life. — *World News Link*



Embarked on a 2,200-mile trek across the South Pole, the coldest territory on earth, Reinhold Messner and Arved

Fuchs hope to draw attention to the necessity of safeguarding this wilderness.

## Saving the antarctic

By Clare Pedrick

**ROME** — Nearly 80 years after Roald Amundsen planted the Norwegian flag at the South Pole, an Italian and a German plan to be the first men to cross the Antarctic from coast to coast on foot.

Reinhold Messner, one of the world's top mountaineers, and Arved Fuchs, a specialist in polar expeditions, recently started their trek of 3,500 kilometers entirely alone, across the coldest expanse of territory on this planet. The two explorers decided to make the crossing without the help of huskies, the heavy-coated dogs that are traditionally used in arctic land travel, and without an airplane to monitor their progress. The idea, says the 45-year-old Messner, is to push human endurance to the limit and to draw attention to the importance of preserving the Antarctic as the world's last real wilderness.

"If you use motorized sleds, heated cabins, airplanes and other technological gadgets, all you are doing is creating the very deceptive impression that the Antarctic is a place that can be conquered," he said. "Our idea is not to find out which is the most convenient method of transport but to understand the largest desert of ice on this earth in all its complexities and with all the risks that result from the fact that we are trekking it with nothing more than human resources."

In choosing the Antarctic, Messner and Fuchs, both energetic campaigners for the environment, hope to gain public support for the idea of turning the area into a giant national park. The Antarctic Treaty, a pact signed by 20 nations that bans the use of the area for nuclear testing and radioactive waste disposal and mandates the protection of living resources, will expire in 1991. Many environmentalists fear that without treaty protection the Antarctic will be vulnerable to commercial exploitation.

The Messner-Fuchs expedition was set to begin at Berkner Island, in the northwestern Antarctic. The two men flew there from Chile. Their goal was McMurdo Sound, at the south of a continent that is almost as large as

United States and Australia combined, and they hoped to reach the South Pole in time for Christmas. After that, it will be a race against time to finish the trek before the savage Antarctic winter sets in at the end of February.

Even in summer the Antarctic is known as one of the most hostile territories on earth, a desolate wasteland of ice where the temperature often drops below minus 35 degrees centigrade and where blizzards and intense freezing winds can last for weeks at a time. In winter, temperatures of minus 80 degrees centigrade are not unusual.

Messner, who was born in the

mountainous Dolomite region of northern Italy, admitted to being scared by the challenge. "Thinking of this next adventure I have the same worries and terrible fear that I had as a young boy when I made my first climbs up the Dolomites," he said. "For me, this journey means conquering other areas of myself, which so far have not been put to the test."

Lean, bearded and with the strong accent of one who grew up near the border with Austria, Messner is best known as a mountaineer, famous as the only man ever to climb all 14 of the world's highest mountains without oxygen supplies. During a career

that spans 25 years he has scaled peaks from Mount Everest to Kilimanjaro. Between expeditions he lives with his companion, Sabine, and their 2-year-old daughter in a castle perched, appropriately enough, on the side of a mountain in Italy's Alto Adige region. This latest adventure represents a new departure. "It seemed that mountaineering had no more secrets to unfold. I've solved all the problems there are to be solved when it comes to mountaineering," he said.

Four years passed after Messner first had the idea of the Antarctic trek. Two years ago, as

a kind of trial run, he walked

to their final destination, the southern point of McMurdo Sound, before the onset of winter to load up with enough provisions to last five weeks. In the harsh Antarctic conditions their daily intake of food should be a massive 6,000 calories. With this in mind, a Milan firm that specializes in developing foodstuffs for expeditions designed a special menu, composed of high-energy

meals.

"At this stage, with the wind in our favor, we should manage as much as 30 to 50 kilometers a day," said Messner. "But snow blizzards can whip up at any time and this could slow us down considerably."

If the two explorers don't make it to their final destination, the southern point of McMurdo Sound, before the onset of winter it will be too dangerous to send an aircraft to pick them up. "If that happens, we'll have no choice but to sit it out at one of the polar scientific bases and wait until spring," said Messner. "But Sabine has already told me that this time she's not going to hang around at home to wait for me!"

World News Link

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## Iraq to repay \$3 billion of foreign debt this year

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq's financial problems should ease in the coming decade and the government will be able to speed up paying off the huge foreign debt it ran up during the eight-year war with Iran, Acting Finance Minister Mohammad Mehdi Saleh said Sunday.

Saleh, who is also trade minister, told a news conference that Baghdad will pay off \$3 billion of its debt this year and stop all its short-term credits with foreign countries in a bid to accelerate its post-war recovery.

"We will sharply reduce our purchases by short-term credit... we're capable of paying that in cash," Saleh said.

The U.S.-educated economist, who drew up a new austerity budget unveiled last month, said that an expected rise in oil prices, a higher Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries oil production quota and a cutback in imports will make faster debt repayment possible.

But he declined to say how much Iraq is in debt or how long it will take to repay its creditors.

Iraq's foreign debt has been conservatively estimated at \$25-\$30 billion.

That does not include an estimated \$30-\$35 billion provided by Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab states to prop up Iraq's economy during the war. Economists believe the Saudis and their partners will write that off.

Baghdad has negotiated rescheduling of its debts with several creditor nations, including France, since the United Nations-sponsored ceasefire in the Gulf war took effect in August 1988.

It has also embarked on an ambitious development plan and expanded its oil and petrochemical industry. Iraq has oil reserves estimated at 100 billion barrels, ranking second only to Saudi Arabia.

Stable oil prices, currently pegged at around \$18 a barrel, will ensure revenues estimated at \$15 billion this year. Iraq's current OPEC quota is 3.14 million barrels.

reals a day.

He noted that Baghdad has already asked Britain, with whom it has about \$800 million credits facilities for 1990, to stop all short-term credits as the government will be able to pay in cash for its purchases, mostly in pharmaceuticals and medicines.

Saleh said short-term credits are costly and add to the country's financial burden.

He said Iraq has redrafted its economic priorities to give agriculture more funds to increase food production in the coming decade.

Investment in the agricultural sector has been increased by 18 per cent this year to about 965 million dinars (more than \$1 billion) to boost production of cereals, poultry and other basic foodstuffs, he disclosed.

But he said the current trade plan will also give priority to food imports. These will take more than one-quarter of the 2.7 billion dinars (\$9 billion) allocated for imports of various goods and capital goods.

It was the first time that President Saddam Hussein's government has officially disclosed details of its annual budget since the Gulf war broke out in September 1980.

Saleh said the government was able to reduce the deficit in this year's budget, which envisaged spending of 10.68 billion dinars (\$35 billion) in various sectors, including military spending.

Iraq is driving to build up a sophisticated arms industry to cut down on weapons purchases from abroad. The Soviet Union and France have been Baghdad's main arms suppliers.

Iraq is expected to earn more than \$25 billion in 1990 from its

oil exports, if prices remain at their current level of around \$18 a barrel.

Saleh said the government will also give priority to the industrial sector, which will receive 2.95 billion dinars (\$6.5 billion) this year to increase production and meet increasing domestic demand for consumer and other basic goods.

He said many state-owned and private sector firms will be able to increase production this year when they receive new equipment and raw materials to overcome shortages in the Iraqi market.

Saleh hoped that slashing government expenditure and increasing production will help reduce high inflation, believed to be running at an annual rate of more than 40 per cent.

### Bahrain sees slow, steady development

BAHRAIN (R) — Bahrain's economy is set for slow but steady growth in the 1990s as the country continues to diversify from oil, an official of the ministry of finance and national economy said Sunday.

Dhafer Alumman, director of economic research, said the gross domestic product (GDP) grew by an estimated two to three per cent in 1989 and would develop at the same pace in the next few years.

In 1988 the economy expanded by six per cent after three years of recession caused by low oil prices, he said. "We were able to survive the recession and now we are definitely moving out of it," he told Reuters.

"We will not see growth like we did during the 1970s boom but we are talking about slow but steady growth."

Alumman said improvements in the country's industrial, banking and tourism sectors were behind the trend.

Bahrain would continue to reduce dependence on its dwindling oil reserves, which are expected to run out by the turn of the century. The island buys most of the oil for its 250,000 barrel-per-day refinery from Saudi Arabia.

In 1988 Bahrain's main aluminum, gas and refining industries grew by 23 per cent, the banking sector by 11.5 per cent and the combined trade and tourism sector by 10.7 per cent.

Higher aluminum prices in 1988 fuelled industrial growth. An improved performance by the offshore banking centre — which grew by 42.5 per cent during the year — boosted the banking sector's contribution, Alumman said.

Several offshore banks have left the island during the past two years in the wake of a regional recession but the 58 which have remained have increased their income by cutting costs and diversifying services.

acceptable." The foreign debt was some \$500 million, while \$2.5 billion was owed by foreign debtors.

In the past eight years Romania has paid back some \$11 billion in principal on loans and \$9 billion in interest and service charges.

On Jan. 3, the Front scrapped a law by Ceausescu banning foreign borrowing.

### Debts cloud Zambia Air

LUSAKA (AP) — The state airline, under threat of losing several international routes because of unpaid landing and overnight fees, asked the Zambian central bank to meet its outstanding debts in hard currency, a bank official said.

Bank of Zambia director of operations, Cuthbert Sinyangwe, said Zambia Airways needed at least \$40 million immediately to pay foreign charges.

A number of nations were planning to bar the airline landing and overnight facilities until they received the outstanding charges, he said.

Sinyangwe was addressing a special sitting of a tribunal chaired by Judge Lombe Chibesakunda tasked with studying this Southern African nation's transport woes.

The tribunal will also recommend whether the government issues operating licences to a private aviation company set to challenge the state airline's monopoly on commercial air services.

Sinyangwe said the bulk of the airline's debts were owned to International Air Transport Association (IATA) members under IATA regulations.

It had become clear Zambia Airways did not generate enough hard currency to make the payments itself, he said.

The loss-making state airline operates regular services from Lusaka to Europe, the Middle East and the United States as well as regional routes in Africa.

### AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Sunday, January 7, 1989  
Central Bank official rates

	Buy	Sell	French franc	112.4	113.9
U.S. dollar	649.0	653.0	Lebanese pound (for 100)	449.1	454.4
Pound Sterling	1050.4	1071.0	Dutch guilder	339.9	345.3
Deutschmark	383.8	387.6	Swedish crown	105.7	106.8
Swiss franc	419.9	424.1	Italian lira (for 100)	51.1	51.6
			Belgian franc (for 10)	184.1	185.9

### ECONOMIC NEWS BRIEFS

#### 71 ships sail through Suez in a day

CAIRO (R) — Seventy-one ships sailed through the Suez Canal Friday, the highest number in 12 years, earning Egypt \$6 million in tolls, Canal Authority sources said. The record was set in 1978 when 95 ships passed through the canal in a single day, they added. Friday, a southbound convoy of 41 ships transited the 195-kilometre waterway from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, including nine oil tankers and 13 container ships. Thirty vessels, including eight tankers, sailed in the opposite direction heading for the Red Sea. The canal, a major source of hard currency for Cairo, earned \$1.38 billion in 1988, up from \$1.29 billion the previous year.

#### Poles cannot afford to own cars

WARSAW (R) — Polish motorists have been hard hit by the latest government price rises and thousands are taking their cars off the road, the official PAP news agency has said. It said 5,000 motorists in Warsaw and 2,000 in Lodz, Poland's second city, had handed back their licence plates since Jan. 1, when a 100 per cent rise in petrol and massive rises in insurance premiums and road tax took effect.

#### U.S. video business sets records

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Sales of pre-recorded videocassettes soared 40 per cent in the United States during 1988, as "Batman" helped spark \$7.1 billion in video sales and rentals. While 1989 movie box-office revenues also set a record, topping \$5 billion, U.S. consumers spent \$2.2 billion on videocassettes, according to the research firm of Paul Kagin Associates. "Batman," the top film at the nation's theatres, was estimated to have sold 11 million cassettes. "Bambi" sold 10.5 million cassettes and "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" sold 8.2 million copies.

#### E. Germany needs more credits

EAST BERLIN (R) — East Germany must borrow more money from Western banks in 1990 to boost its economy, Economics Minister Christa Luft has said. Luft told a meeting that East German debts with the West and Japan amounted to \$20.6 billion. "New credits will be needed in (1990)," she said. "The GDR (East Germany) has made its repayments punctually in the past. That will remain the case," Luft added. She said provisional figures for 1989 showed exports to the West totalling \$9.3 billion and imports from the West at \$11.7 billion. In trade with fellow members of Comecon, a grouping of socialist countries dominated by the East Bloc, East Germany enjoyed a surplus in 1989 equivalent to three or four billion Deutsche marks (\$1.7 to \$2.4 billion), she said. Luft said that, while the East German government would encourage foreign participation, it was determined to maintain a dominant role for public ownership in the country's economy.

## Taiwan trade surplus widens

TAIPEI (AP) — Taiwan registered a trade surplus of \$13.93 billion last year, an increase of 27.5 per cent from 1988, the government has reported.

Taiwan's exports in 1989 totalled \$66.2 billion, a 9.3 per cent increase over 1988, while imports were \$52.27 billion, up 5.3 per cent, said the government's Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics.

Taiwan's surplus with the United States, its largest trading partner, grew 15.1 per cent to \$12 billion last year, the agency said.

Exports to the United States

compared with \$14.82 billion in 1988, and exports to Japan totalled \$9.06 billion, compared with \$8.76 billion in 1988.

Taiwan registered a surplus of \$2.56 billion with European countries last year on two-way trade of \$19.32 billion. The surplus represents a 36.1 per cent increase over the previous year.

External factors boosted Taiwan's exports and its overall trade surplus," said Yu Teh-Pei, chairwoman of the economics department at Soochow University.

Yu said Taiwan won extra export opportunities last year as labour unrest in South Korea and political turmoil in China drove some foreign orders to this island.

The better-than-expected economic situation in the United States also helped Taiwan's trade.

Taiwan's trade with Japan, its second-largest trading partner, posted a deficit of \$6.97 billion last year, up 14.9 per cent from 1988.

Taiwan's imports from Japan totalled \$16.03 billion in 1989,

approached \$2.4 billion of foreign

investment last year, up 104 per cent from 1988.

Japan continued to be the largest foreign investor in Taiwan in 1989 by pumping in \$667 million — or a 47 per cent increase in investment, the Investment Commission reported.

The United States followed with \$380 million, up 154 per cent from 1988, the report said. Investment from Europe totalled \$331 million, a 159 per cent increase from 1988.

Taiwan's efficient manpower and well-developed industrial base attracted foreign investors in Taiwan, said John Ni, director of the government's Industrial Development and Investment Centre.

He added that the island's rising labour costs and disputes on environmental pollution were not considered major problems.

He also attributed the increase to several major projects, including the \$160 million investment by Imperial Chemical Industries of Britain and the \$140 million investment by ICI Omcrow B.V. of Holland. Both involved chemical products.

Foreign investment in the chemical sector totalled \$520 million, while \$391 million went to the electronics and electrical sector.

The report said most Taiwanese investment overseas involved chemical products and financial services.

It said Taiwanese corporate investments overseas approved by the government went up to \$930 million last year, a 325 per cent increase from 1987.

The largest investment was in the United States with \$509 million. It was followed by Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand.

The Economic Daily News said many Taiwanese companies, in order to evade taxes and avoid red tape, invested overseas without approval from the Investment Commission.

over Israel's only natural resources and its economic importance.

Instead, it suggested selling a minority stake on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange and to ICL employees. Peres and Sharon are considering the proposal.

Relations between Sharon and Eitan soured recently over Sharon's demand that ICL headquarters be transferred from Tel Aviv to the southern Negev desert city of Beersheba. Sharon also opposed ICL's purchase of a Chilean plant in Chile.

Treasury officials said Eitan would be replaced by Eitan Rafi, a former senior finance ministry official who is now chairman of Israel's Maritime Bank.

were now stuck with government bonds and may be forced to default on payments.

The credit chain is on the brink of collapsing. The clearing system has been crippled," said the banker, who asked not to be named. "If the central bank doesn't ease its credit restrictions, the system could go bust as soon as this week."

Most of the short-term deposits the government rescheduled will be due Tuesday and Wednesday. There are fears that investors will turn the money into dollars and not put it back into the system, the banker said.

## Financial collapse looms in Argentina

BUENOS AIRES (R) — Despite a spectacular comeback of the austral currency and a fall in consumer prices, economists have warned that Argentina's economy, stricken by hyperinflation, was barely a step away from financial collapse.

Officials trumpeted the 50.3 per cent revaluation of the austral Thursday and a drop in prices as proof that a Draconian restriction of the money supply was a success.

But economists say it has stung the financial system.

"Credit has all but dried up," said Enrique Szewach, chief economist at the Latin American

vice after the scandal and was appointed by Sharon in 1986 to head ICL, Israel's most profitable state-owned firm, and the first major firm to be sold in Israel's privatisation programme.

"He opposed the government policy to sell ICL. This is the major reason Peres and Sharon wanted to replace him," a treasury official said.

Eitan led a now-disbanded defence ministry intelligence unit that recruited U.S. navy analyst Jonathan Pollard to spy for Israel. Pollard was sentenced to life in 1987 and his wife, Anne, was jailed for five years as an accomplice.

Eitan left the intelligence service

last month dealt a blow to the original plan, voting to recommend that the government retain control because of the firm's hold

on nominated government bonds.

Private economists estimate the government soaked up between 30 and 40 per cent of the money supply last week to shore up the austral, which had lost nearly half its value against the U.S. dollar last month as hyperinflation hit Argentina for the second time in six months.

The monetary measures both affected investors' trust and disrupted the credit system, bankers and economists said.

An executive at a leading European bank said businesses that had placed substantial sums of money in short-term deposits

were now stuck with government bonds and may be forced to default on payments.

## Sanchez beats Reneberg

WELLINGTON (R) — Top-seeded Spaniard Esteban Sanchez won the New Zealand national tennis title on Sunday but only after a five-set thriller against American Richey Reneberg, playing in his first grand prix final.

Sanchez, the world number 17, has struggled with his form all week and made heavy weather of dispatching Reneberg 6-7, 6-4, 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 in 3½ hours.

In the end the experience of Sanchez, who has played 17 grand prix finals, paid off as the match became an endurance test. "I don't think I played the big points too well. Maybe if I'd won a couple more, I'd have won the match," said eighth-seeded Reneberg.

"Maybe I was a little tired at the end. It's tough to play a match that long — it's tough to keep the concentration going." Sanchez raced to a 4-0 lead in

the first set but the American staged a remarkable comeback, breaking Sanchez in the sixth and eighth games to take the set in a tiebreak.

The Spaniard said he had felt the pressure, despite being 41 places higher than Reneberg in the world rankings. "I started really fast and it was going well for me, too well for my thinking, and when he started to play better I felt the nerves."

After much sawing Sanchez capitalised on Reneberg's serving problems in the deciding set. "I think he got a little down, a little negative, and I was able to take the set," he said.

"Although he rated his victory last week in the Hopman Cup with his sister Arantxa slightly higher, Sanchez said his triumph in the \$150,000 Wellington tournament would give him confidence for the Australian Open later this month.

## GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN  
AND OMAR SHARIF  
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### GRASP THE BRASS RING

North-South vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
♦ A K J 10 6	♦ 8 5	♦ Q 9	♦ 7 4 3
♦ 6 4 3	♦ A Q J 5	♦ K J 7 6 3	♦ A Q 10 9 4
♦ 2	♦ 6 4	♦ 9 8	♦ 5 2
The bidding:			
North	East	South	West
1 NT	2 C	2 ♦	4 ♦
5 ♦	Pass	Pass	Pass
Opening lead: Six of ♦			

If there is anything we fear more than a person who proudly claims to "play by the seat of the pants," it is one who claims to go "by the book." The first is likely to be a player with more imagination than is healthy; the latter, one with no imagination at all.

The auction is reported as it occurred, and it does not find favor with this department. We would not consider anything other than a take-out double with the East hand.

The solution would have been to lead the king of diamonds at the opening gun. Then the heart shift at trick two would have been obvious, and bye-bye contract.

However, a rather more imaginative defender would have defected the contract. With five-card support for partner's suit, West should have realized that two rounds of diamonds were not going live-indeed, even the first diamond might not survive. It might be vital for West to direct the defense, but she had no entry.

The solution would have been to lead the king of diamonds at the opening gun. Then the heart shift at trick two would have been obvious, and bye-bye contract.

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# World News

## Liberian refugees report troops attacking civilians

MONROVIA, Liberia (AP) — Liberian refugees have poured into neighbouring Ivory Coast to escape fighting in a border area and claim soldiers have shot and killed an unknown number of civilians, a report said Sunday.

The report broadcast by the British Broadcasting Corp. (BBC) came as refugees fleeing the region told other reporters that Liberian troops were killing civilians indiscriminately. The claims could not be independently verified.

Diplomats have said it is difficult to determine the number of Liberians fleeing hostilities in the region, 120 kilometres north east of Monrovia, but some reported the figure as high as 8,000 to 10,000.

Fighting erupted two weeks ago when, according to Liberia, about 100 rebels led by Liberian dissident Charles Taylor crossed into north eastern Nimba County from Ivory Coast with the intent of toppling President Samuel Doe.

Doe, who seized power in a bloody 1980 coup, told thousands gathered Saturday at a rally in Monrovia that Liberian forces were engaged in a huge search of the area to flush out any remaining rebels.

He also warned citizens to inform on the rebels whereabouts "because if we catch them in your home, we will treat you as a rebel. Therefore, furnish us with information if you want to be on the safe side."

Liberia has said the rebels, who call themselves the National Patriotic Front, had killed more than 200 people, but that only a few dissidents remained on the run, "sporadically attacking civilians in the forest areas of Nimba."

Doe said troops were bringing the situation under control and that a dusk-to-dawn curfew has been clamped on the sparsely populated region.

Brig.-Gen. Edward Smith, the army commander in charge of the embattled Nimba county, revealed the civilian casualties Friday when Doe visited the region.

The radio quoted Smith as saying that in one border town alone, seven people had been shot and killed as they were praying in a mosque. He said only

one Liberian soldier was killed in the fighting.

Smith also produced three identity cards he said were taken from suspected rebels identified only as Ivorian nationals.

Liberia repeatedly has accused Ivory Coast of harbouring Doe's opponents, a charge the Ivorians deny. Ivory Coast President Felix Houphouet-Boigny reportedly sent a high-level delegation to Damane, the Ivorian border village where the dissidents are said to have crossed into Liberia.

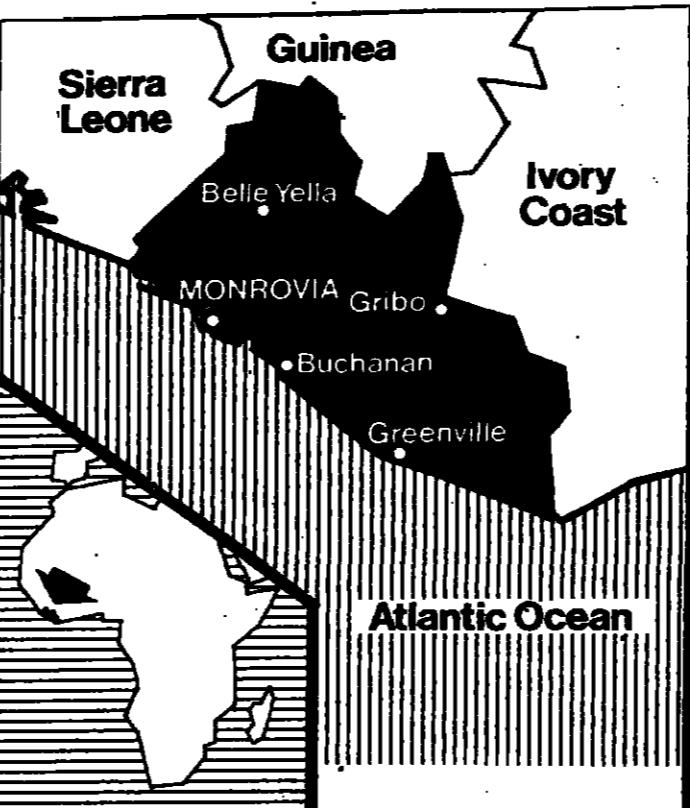
Liberia also has claimed the rebels were trained in Libya and Burkina Faso. Burkina Faso has denied the charge.

The dissidents are reportedly led by Taylor, the director-general of Liberia's General Services Agency from 1980-83.

His forces appear to have no connection with Liberia's opposition parties, the largest of which, the United People's Party, has condemned the invaders for using unconstitutional methods against the government.

Doe, a former sergeant major, seized power in an April 1980 coup in which President William Tolbert and most of his political allies were killed.

Liberia was founded by freed American slaves in 1947.



## Soviets pledge to open border with Romania

BUCHAREST (AP) — Moving to improve Soviet-Romanian ties, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze has pledged to open the border between the two countries and reaffirmed the Kremlin's offer to provide oil and gas to help Romania through the winter.

At the same time, Romania's interim leadership is taking steps toward greater democracy, announcing that it would adhere to an international human rights agreement and offering to give fledgling opposition parties access to the media before holding free elections.

After more than five hours of talks with Romanian leaders Saturday, Shevardnadze said the two countries would begin negotiations in the near future on opening the border to allow people on both sides to make contact "without any difficulties whatsoever."

Shevardnadze's visit appeared to mark a turning point in Soviet-Romanian relations, which had been frosty in the past, first because ousted leader Nicolae Ceausescu pursued maverick foreign and economic policies and later because he rejected any reforms.

Since Ceausescu was toppled in a popular revolt on Dec. 22 and executed three days later, the

new leadership has moved quickly to overturn decrees that greatly restricted Romanians' freedom and brought them considerable hardships, such as food rationing and shortages of heat and electricity in winter.

In a further move away from Ceausescu's tight rule, Romanian Foreign Minister Sergiu Celac issued a statement Saturday pledging to adhere to human rights commitments that Ceausescu's government had said it did not feel bound to honour.

Celac said Romania would abide by wide-ranging human rights accords adopted last January in Vienna by 35 nations attending the conference on security and cooperation.

The accords promised greater freedom of religion, travel and emigration; a freer flow of information and the right of citizens in each country to form groups to monitor their government's human rights record.

The opening of the Soviet border will be of particular benefit to Soviet Moldavians, whose spoken language is identical to Romanian. Soviet Moldavia consists largely of territory annexed from Romania by Josef Stalin in 1940 under a secret protocol to the Hitler-Stalin pact which was recently declared invalid by the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies.

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## Aquino orders seizure of all private airfields

MANILA (Agencies) — President Corazon Aquino, wary of another coup attempt, has ordered the takeover of all private airstrips in the Philippines and the seizure of private aircraft used by army mutineers in last December's military coup.

Aquino, in a signed copy of her directive obtained by Reuters Sunday, ordered an investigation of the aircraft's owners and pilots and the suspension of their operations pending an inquiry into their alleged role in the failed coup.

The presidential palace has not said why the order was not published, as it must be to take legal effect. One newspaper speculated it was an oversight.

Aquino announced Sunday that she has signed a law expanding the powers of a commission investigating the December coup attempt and will help find conspirators who were "brought off."

In her weekly radio address, Mrs. Aquino also said emergency powers given her by Congress last month would ensure the delivery of essential services, prevent an economic slowdown and bring "justice for our people against the traitors."

Mrs. Aquino said the powers of the commission include the right to examine the bank accounts of supporters of the failed coup.

"This measure is a sign of our firm resolve to expose and punish the guilty, especially if they conspired after being bought off with 30 pieces of silver," Mrs. Aquino said.

The law — signed last Friday and made public only Sunday — grants quasi-judicial powers to the five-member commission, including the right to grant witness immunity from prosecution.

Defence officials have accused opposition politicians, businessmen and foreigners of giving financial and other support to the rebellion.

The commission can require the monetary board to disclose information or grant authority to examine bank accounts if it has "reasonable ground" to believe that the funds were used in the coup attempt.

The law provides the commission with a yearlong mandate.

About 500 rebel officers and men involved in the December mutiny remain at large, including cashiered army Colonel Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan. Orbos said the government wanted to warn owners not to allow their airstrips to be used by the rebels to flee the country.

The presidential palace has not said why the order was not published, as it must be to take legal effect. One newspaper speculated it was an oversight.

Aquino signed the order on Dec. 27 in line with emergency powers given her by Congress last month to help thwart further coup attempts. She has survived six army mutinies since taking power in a popular revolt in February 1986.

The Philippine Daily Inquirer newspaper said most of the country's 128 registered private airfields were owned by multinational companies and former business associates of late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Some of the rebel army officers who nearly toppled Aquino in the Dec. 1-7 coup bid were former allies of Marcos, toppled by Aquino in the 1986 revolt.

Aquino issued the order to prevent "the use of these facilities and aircraft in the furtherance of mutiny and rebellion," the directive said.

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LOS ANGELES (Agencies) — Panamanian investigators are preparing more than 300 corruption cases against officials of the deposed rule, whose take may have amounted to one-fifth of Panama's national budget, a newspaper reported.

But corruption prosecutions are hindered by the sabotage of records by Noriega loyalists early during fighting in the capital on Dec. 21, the paper said.

Court employees told investigators they saw several supreme court magistrates of Panama setting their own files afire. A blaze swept through the court offices at the Justice Ministry, destroying most of the case records.

Officials in the controller general's office said half the cases they have received had been shelved by the Noriega regime.

Meanwhile, the former head of the U.S. Justice Department alleged Saturday that there was an official conspiracy of silence over the true death toll in the U.S. invasion of Panama, saying it was more than 1,000 rather than hundreds reported officially.

"I think there has been a conspiracy of silence from the very beginning. There has been a failure to openly address the question," former U.S. Attorney-General Ramsey Clark told a news conference.

"There is an obvious strong motive not to count bodies by governments. But attention must be paid. History demands to know, humanity demands to know, the future demands to know how many were killed," he said.

The public administration of the Noriega regime was based only on seeing how much they could steal. And what they stole was incredible," Panama City Mayor Guillermo Cocheo said.

Cocheo said his staff has identified and fired employees who

served in Noriega's paramilitary death squads. Officials also are hunting phantom workers — the no-show cronies who regularly received government paychecks.

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"I think there has been a conspiracy of silence from the very beginning. There has been a failure to openly address the question," former U.S. Attorney-General Ramsey Clark told a news conference.

"There is an obvious strong motive not to count bodies by governments. But attention must be paid. History demands to know, humanity demands to know, the future demands to know how many were killed," he said.

The public administration of the Noriega regime was based only on seeing how much they could steal. And what they stole was incredible," Panama City Mayor Guillermo Cocheo said.

Cocheo said his staff has identified and fired employees who

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But corruption prosecutions are hindered by the sabotage of records by Noriega loyalists early during fighting in the capital on Dec. 21, the paper said.

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